

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 011500

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66610

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S/S-WHLUERS

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R 210011Z JAN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T STATE 011500

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 11500 ACTION LONDON MUSCAT INFO CINCPAC
USCINCEUR SECDEF JCS CINCPACFLT CINCUSNAVEUR CNO 17 JAN

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 011500

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MU, UK, XO

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE US USE OF RAF FACILITY AT MASIRAH

REF: (A) LONDON 0618 (NOTAL); (B) LONDON 0630 (NOTAL).

1. WILBERFORCE OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY MET WITH DEPARTMENT
OFFICERS TODAY REGARDING US USE OF MASIRAH. ACCORDING TO
WILBERFORCE, OMANI FONMIN HAD INFORMED HMG THAT THE
SULTAN APPROVES OF OCCASIONAL US USE OF THE AIRFIELD
AT MASIRAH AND EXPECTS THE UK TO SORT OUT DETAILS ON
THIS WITH THE US. THE OMANIS HAD POINTED OUT THAT THE
PRESENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN OMAN AND THE UK CALLS ONLY
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FOR UK AND OCCASIONAL COMMONWEALTH AIRCRAFT STAGING

AT MASIRAH; THUS AGREEMENT MUST BE BROADENED IF THE US IS TO BE PERMITTED TO USE THE AIRFIELD. THE OMANI FONMIN EMPHASIZED ALSO THE NEED TO KEEP ANY AGREEMENT REGARDING US USAGE SECRET. ASKED IF HMG ALSO INTENDED KEEP AGREEMENT SECRET WILBERFORCE REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT.

2. WILBERFORCE INDICATED THAT THE FCO WOULD BE DISCUSSING WITH THE UKMOD WHETHER IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ACCOMMODATE US AIRCRAFT AT MASIRAH. HE NOTED THAT MASIRAH IS NOT EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT "REGULAR DETACHMENTS" OF US AIRCRAFT, ALTHOUGH THIS NEED NOT PRECLUDE OCCASIONAL

SHORT VISITS. HE NOTED ALSO THAT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WHICH THE US INTENDS TO OPERATE INTO MASIRAH WOULD BE LAND-BASED OR CARRIER-BASED. HMG ALSO HAS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF SERVICES WOULD BE REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF US AIRCRAFT. THE AIRFIELD OPERATES IN DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY, AND BOTH FUEL AND WATER ARE VERY LIMITED. FUEL SUPPLIES ARE SO LIMITED, HE SAID, THAT UNLESS PRESENT PLANS ARE ALTERED NO FUEL WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR VISITING US AIRCRAFT UNTIL AT LEAST NEXT OCTOBER WHEN THE NEXT BRITISH TANKER IS DUE IN FOR REPLENISHMENT. THE OTHER FACILITIES AT MASIRAH ARE COMMENSURATE, HE CONCLUDED, WITH THE VERY LIMITED USE THE RAF MAKES OF THE AIRFIELD.

3. SPECIFICALLY, WILBERFORCE POSED FOUR BASIC QUESTIONS TO WHICH HMG REQUIRES ANSWERS IN ORDER TO CONSIDER THIS MATTER:

(A) THE TYPES OF AIRCRAFT THE US ENVISAGES OPERATING INTO MASIRAH;

(B) THE KINDS OF MISSIONS (I.E. "THE CHARACTER OF THE FLIGHTS") TO BE FLOWN FROM MASIRAH;

(C) THE EXPECTED FREQUENCY OF USE AND DURATION OF SECRET

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STAY OF US AIRCRAFT AT MASIRAH; AND,

(D) THE GROUND SUPPORT WHICH WOULD BE NEEDED.

4. WILBERFORCE EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE INFORMATION ON ALL OF THESE CATEGORIES IS IMPORTANT TO HMG'S DELIBERATIONS, PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT IS (D) BECAUSE OF MASIRAH'S LIMITED FACILITIES.

5. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS ASKED IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY THE US COULD RE-PLLENISH FUEL USED; WILBERFORCE SAID THIS OBVIOUSLY COULD BE CONSIDERED BUT THAT HE KNOWS VERY LITTLE OF THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF THE FUEL SUPPLY SITUATION AT MASIRAH BEYOND WHAT HE HAD JUST TOLD US.

6. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AGREED WITH WILBERFORCE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTIONS HE HAD POSED AND PROMISED TO OBTAIN ANSWERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KISSINGER

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